

W I T K Z

The Spark Gap

March 1989

Not Available at Newsstands

Official Journal
of the
Wellesley Amateur Radio Society



President's Message

by Tom Kinahan, N1CPE

[The president's message, which usually graces this space, will not appear this month owing to Tom's being stricken by a severe attack of "writer's block". The Spark Gap will return to normal next month, God willing. —ed.]

In this issue.....

**1989 Membership
Directory**



No-Code License

At the WARS meetings in January and February, members debated the question of whether there should be a new VHF-only amateur operating license which would require a written examination but no proficiency in Morse code. This month we shall set forth, as objectively as we can, the arguments most commonly heard for and against

this proposal.

The question arises again, it appears, primarily as a result of the loss of part of the 220 MHz band to the land mobile service. The reasoning of proponents goes as follows:

(a) one of the reasons we lost 220-222 MHz was that to the FCC it appeared the band was underutilized;

(b) the band was underutilized because there are not enough hams;

(c) in general, the VHF and UHF amateur bands are underpopulated, and we may lose them if we do not take urgent steps to increase their use;

(d) the Morse-code requirement is perceived as a major obstacle by prospective hams;

(e) therefore, if we drop the code requirement, we will at once increase the number of hams (and thus the political clout of amateur radio), and increase the usage of the frequencies above 30 MHz.;

(f) Furthermore, Morse code is obsolete, having been superseded by computer-aided digital modes for purposes of emergency communications and traffic handling, so the code requirement no longer can be defended on grounds that the amateur radio service is supposed to provide a pool of trained opera

Meetings

All meetings are on Thursdays at
7:30 p.m.

March 2
March 16
April 6
April 20

211 Washington Street, Wellesley

tors in case of national emergency:

(g) As a museum piece, Morse code is now merely a specialty within amateur radio, and it should not be favored over other specialties (e.g. satellite communication);

(h) In general, the average age of hams is increasing, and our kind may die out entirely if we do not get new blood soon: Morse code requirements simply stunt our growth to no good purpose.

The opponents of the no-code license (i.e., proponents of Morse code) respond as follows:

(a) Knowledge of Morse code is and has al

ways been a unifying factor among hams, and a badge of honor;

(b) Learning to receive five words per minute is so easy that the requirement cannot possibly be a barrier to anyone with the slightest interest in getting a license;

(c) The wide latitude granted to amateurs to use the radio spectrum depends on the amateur service being self-disciplined and self-policing; adding a large group of under-motivated and undisciplined operators would ruin our reputation and lead in the long term to loss of privileges;

(d) Morse code is not entirely obsolete — in an emergency there may not always be computers at hand to act as operators — and if we license persons who are ignorant of the code, that step will itself hasten the code's demise and diminish our usefulness;

(e) The no-code approach has been tried and found wanting in the case of the 11-meter band, and has proven a failure in other countries (such as Japan);

(f) The number of hams is at an historical high; there is no need to lower standards simply to achieve greater numbers.

There are other arguments on both sides, but most are *ad hominem* attacks on the motives and ancestry of those on the opposite side. There are, however, several assertions of fact in the arguments above, and it might be well to establish the truth of these assertions as a means of resolving some of the disputes. For example:

(a) Has anyone established that there is a significant number of people who would study for a written examination and become active hams if only they could skip Morse code?

Officers

President:

Tom Kinahan, N1CPE 508/ 877-3456

Vice President:

Rita Baker, N1DDI 508/ 481-0863

Treasurer:

C. J. McDonald, WB1BUM
617/ 332-6091

Recording Secretary:

Roger Smith, W1EOA 617/ 235-6239

Corresponding Secretary:

Kathy Pate, KA1IYR 508/ 785-1801

Fundraising Chairman:

David Kent, N2AWG 508/ 875-2126

Operations Chairman:

Vern Valero, ND1Z 508/ 533-6822

The Spark Gap
Official Journal of the Wellesley
Amateur Radio Society

Editor:

Arthur W. Anderson, NT1M
P. O. Box 9009
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181
617/ 449-0556

The Spark Gap is published monthly, except July and August, by the Wellesley Amateur Radio Society. The Society hereby grants permission for reprinting any articles from **The Spark Gap**, provided only that the author and this newspaper are credited.

The Society's purpose is to encourage participation in amateur radio. Membership is open to all radio amateurs; dues are \$15 per year (September through August). Meetings of the Society are held on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The Society conducts classes for those intending to take FCC license examinations, and examination sessions four times a year. For more information please write to the editor, or to the Society:

The Wellesley Amateur Radio Society
211 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181

(b) Many countries have a VHF-only license requiring no code; what has been their experience?

(c) Is there *objective* evidence that the loss of 220-222 MHz turned on the relative quietness of the band?

(d) Is the perceived increase in average age of hams due to insufficient new entrants, or to an increase in the average age of new hams? In other words, is amateur radio really moribund?

(e) What evidence is there that the code re-

quirement filters out undesirables? Do we agree on who are the "undesirables"?

The Spark Gap for April 1989 will contain an open forum on this question, publishing all letters received concerning it. Please help us present a complete range of views; send your opinions to the editor at the address at left. Your contribution need not be typewritten, or even pretty, as long as it is readable.

March Speaker

At our meeting on March 16, James Lee, N1DDK, will address us on the subject of voice-synthesis and repeater control. He is one the engineers working on the homebrew controller for the Westborough repeater (145.27 MHz).

Flea Markets

After last month's issue went to press, the date of the WARS flea market was changed from April 9 to April 30 (still Sunday). The affair will be held outdoors at Wellesley High School, 9:00am to 2:00pm. Admission is \$2.00 for buyers and sellers alike. Talk-in on 147.03 MHz.

The Framingham ARA's flea market will take place on April 9, at the Framingham Civic League Building, 214 Concord St. (Route 126) starting at 9:00am (8:30 for exhibitors). Admission is \$5 before 10am and \$2 after 10. Talk-in on 147.75 MHz. For more detail, call Jon Weiner, K1VVC (508/ 877-7166). The hamfest will include an ARRL/VEC exam session.

Mount Equinox

It is not too soon to block out June 9-12 for

the annual WARS outing on Mount Equinox, the most fun of any event on our calendar.

The mountain rises nearly 4,000 feet on the southwestern side of the Green Mountain chain, and affords from its summit breathtaking views in nearly all directions. A paved toll road, the "Skyline Drive" takes you from the valley near Manchester (Vt.) to the top of the mountain, where there is a small hotel with an excellent restaurant. About 200 yards from the hotel is a clearing in the forest where we set up our tents, towers, charcoal grills, etc. The club has its own power service at this site, so generators are unnecessary.

Now, there are two ostensible reasons for our being on the mountain. First is the ARRL June VHF QSO party, the premier VHF contest, where we never fail to distinguish ourselves, despite ruthless, if not unscrupulous, competition (see last December's **Spark Gap**). Second is the annual hillclimb of the Vintage Sports Car Club, for which we provide safety communications. It is truly a thrill to see (and hear!) a Lotus Type 31 single-seater (from the 1950's) scream up the Skyline Drive and rein up in the parking lot at the hotel. Here you can see Ferrari Testa Rossas in showroom condition and countless other gems, casually parked after the race.



As to accommodations, there is something for every taste. Effete, city-bred folk stay in the hotel and eat in the Continental restaurant there. Others bring camping trailers and tents, and enjoy cooking and sleeping in the beautiful outdoors. The toughest element sleep in their cars, disdaining creature comforts.

The schedule has not yet been set, but we shall probably meet at the club on Friday morning (the 9th) to pack up our towers,

beams, and coax, and travel in caravan to the mountain (about a four-and-a-half-hour journey). There, we shall set up our operating tents and erect four towers, then enjoy the evening each in his own way. On Saturday morning, those who prefer to work the hillclimb will do that, while the contesters check out rigs and amplifiers before the start of the contest (2pm). The contest runs throughout the night (although even the fanatics usually pack it in by midnight) and ends Sunday at 10pm. Usually, at this time of year, there are periods of sporadic-E propagation which cause spectacular 6-meter and 2-meter band openings, and a great deal of excitement.

Monday morning, we shall get up at leisure, have breakfast, and strike the tents and towers. By mid-afternoon, we shall have arrived back in Wellesley and stowed the gear at the Red Cross. We shall have been away only four days, but it will seem much longer than that; the outing has meant a welcome change of scene, and many enjoyable hours messing about with radios, free of the distractions of home and family.

Present for the contest will be three of the country's top VHF contesters (Arnie W1GCI, Art WA2TIF, and Jeff WA2TEO), but even rank beginners are made to feel welcome, and there is work (and fun) for all. The hillclimb, too, presents a challenge for the operators stationed up and down the mountain, as the object is to keep the cars spaced apart and to react quickly in case one of them breaks down. You will find it difficult not to learn something on this trip, and impossible not to have fun. Don't miss it!

WARS CW Contest

The contest (December **Spark Gap**) has now been under way two months, and informal reports are starting to trickle in. Thomas

Burton, KX1H, reports that he would take the cake for "longest ragchew" — if he were not disqualified for having an Extra-class license. Dave Bush, KA1RWK, reports a 90-minute QSO with his niece; can you top that? Next month **The Spark Gap** will publish a mid-contest survey of progress in the five contest categories: (1) Most States, (2) Most countries, (3) Most QSOs, (4) Longest ragchew, and (5) Most QSOs—Extra. Let us know how you are doing, by dropping a line to the editor at PO Box 9009, Wellesley 02181.

Mass QSO Party

This contest begins at 7:00pm, March 31 — sponsored by us! Scoring includes one point for phone contacts, two points for CW, and five points for contacts with W1TKZ. In order to give everyone a shot at the five points, we would like to put two transmitters on the air simultaneously at the club station. This means getting up another antenna, to supplement our multiband vertical. We hope to be able to put our triband beam atop 30 feet or so of tower, at the Red Cross. It also means staying on the air for as much of the 48-hour contest as we can manage. Want to help out? Call Tom, N1CPE, at 508/ 877-3456.

Also, we should like to encourage stations in the rare counties to be QRV, because stations outside Massachusetts use the number of counties as a multiplier. If you know anyone in Dukes (Martha's Vineyard) or Nantucket, try to get him or her on the air for the contest.

American Lung Association Bike Ride

Charlie Madden, a student in our Novice class, is the organizer of a bike ride through

all six New England States, under the auspices of the American Lung Association. Starting in Springfield (Massachusetts) on **June 18th**, the group will stop over night in New London, Providence, Lowell, Biddeford (Maine), Concord (NH), Bellows Falls (Vt), and again in Springfield.

Charlie is looking for about five amateur radio operators to accompany the ride; each op should have radios for two VHF bands; sleeping accommodations and food will be provided. The hams will provide safety communications during the event, and if any are EMTs as well, all the better. Charlie also is looking for base stations on each leg of the ride.

If you would like to help, please notify Tom, N1CPE (508/ 877-3456).

Field Day

And while you have your June calendar out, may as well blacken in the weekend of June 24th and 25th for the annual ARRL Field Day. Many club members are already thinking about antennas for this event, mostly along the lines of erecting beam antennas instead of the rather disappointing dipoles of recent years, especially for 6 and 10 meters. The club owns a nifty 40-meter wire beam, which needs only someone to figure out how to raise it at the Sprague School — speak up if you want to try it.

Dinner Before Meetings



It has come to the attention of this newspaper that some members and guests have, owing to an excess of zeal and a lack of time, been arriving at club meetings without din-

ner. Others, no doubt, have chosen to eat rather than attend. One member attests that he was forced to wolf down twenty-seven meatballs in a bar because an appointment in Boston kept him there until 6:30 and the club meeting started at 7:30, leaving him no time for dinner. In order to forestall such hardship in the future, a new emergency pizza service will be inaugurated this month, starting March 2. Members — or others who want to attend our biweekly meetings — who are cramped for time on meeting nights are urged to call W1TKZ on the club repeater (147.03 MHz) by 6:15pm. Operators will be standing by to take pizza orders, with the food to be served at about 7:00pm at club headquarters. Except in cases of demonstrated financial need, the affair will be strictly Dutch treat.

Exam Session

The scheduled ARRL/VEC examination session went off like clockwork on February 25. Fifteen persons sat for licensing examinations at club headquarters, and twelve of them were successful.

Jerry Driscoll, KA1000, upgraded from Advanced to Extra, and has applied for a new call sign, thus consigning the unforgettable KA1000 to oblivion.

John Kosian, KA1CTL, and Dennis Ditto, N1DIZ, upgraded from General to Advanced. John Muratore, N1FUM, went from Technician to General. Dave Bush, KA1RWK, passed element 4A (Advanced written) and Karen Ditto got element 2 (Novice written).

Two men, Robert Charcanti and Scott Sminkey, covered themselves with glory. Both sat for the Novice exams (elements 1A and 2), and passed; then both went on to pass elements 3A, 3B, and 4A. Therefore, they will receive their first licenses as Tech-

nicians, but as soon as they get element 1B (13 wpm code) they will immediately upgrade to Advanced. Only sheer exhaustion prevented them from going right through to Extra in a single day! Scott once held a Novice ticket, but it expired in 1976; Robert is getting his first license.

Six Volunteer Examiners, headed by Vern Valero, ND1Z, conducted the session; the others were Art Anderson (NT1M), Bruno Bedetti (NR1G), Mike Karp (KC1JP), Barry Kasindorf (WA1YDL), and Tom Kinahan (N1CPE). Tim Cadogan (N1FME) acted as exam police, having not yet received his formal accreditation as a VE.

For those who would like to try again in the next few weeks, there is an exam session March 18 at Melrose City Hall; call Rich, NC1V, (617/ 665-6061) for details. There is also a session at the Framingham hamfest (see article, above). The next WARS session will be held on May 20.

17-Meter Band

In a surprise move, the FCC opened the 17-meter band to American amateurs on January 30 (instead of July 1, as originally proposed). General, Advanced, and Extra Class licensees may now use 18.068-18.110 MHz for CW, RTTY, etc., and 18.110-18.168 MHz for SSB. Note that the bottom of the band is 18.068 MHz, not 18.060, as erroneously reported in last November's **Spark Gap**. See this month's *QST* for complete details.

DX News

by Art Anderson, NT1M



First, a puzzler. In early February, we heard a station on 20m CW with the call SJ9WL. He was surrounded by a huge pileup, and fi-

nally slowed down to explain that he was not a new country, but that he was on the air to raise donations for disabled amateurs, from a place called "Morokulien". The **RSGB Amateur Radio Operating Manual** shows a place by that name on the border between Sweden and Norway, with the note that Sweden assigns the SJ prefix to it, and Norway assigns LG. The **ARRL Operating Manual** shows it in the same place, but mentions only the SJ prefix.

We consulted the **Times Atlas**, which contains an exhaustive gazetteer of place names, but "Morokulien" is not among them. Finally, we checked our large-scale map of Sweden brought home by our daughter who visited there. No "Morokulien" there, either.

So the question is, what — or who — is "Morokulien"? Answers will appear here next month.

Two new "countries" have been added to the DXCC list: Rotuma, and Malii Vysotskii Island. The former is an island at 12°30'S, 177°05'E, which used to be considered part of Fiji. M-V Island (according to knowledgeable club members on the Wednesday night net) is a small staging area at the Russian end of the Saimaan Canal, which runs between Finland and Russia. According to our sources, the island was leased to Finland by Russia, and somehow fits the DX Advisory Committee's definition of "country". We believe M-V Island lies near 60°37'N, 28°31'E, in the Gulf of Finland.

The phenomenal propagation of the first two months of 1989 has meant a bumper harvest of new ones for ARS NT1M (but with only thirty-three countries confirmed, for us most of them **must** be new!):

Call	kHz	UTC	Date	QTH
T77J	28039	1316	15 Jan	San Marino
WP4FMH	28004	1404	21	Puerto Rico

GJ2LU	28014	1447	25	Jersey
WL7E/KH6	28008	2318	25	Hawaii
EL7X	14009	2333	26	Liberia
UA1OIL	14012	0102	29	Franz Joseph Land
PJ9JT	21024	2259	1 Feb	Curaçao
CE0FFD	28013	1623	2	Easter Island
W6QL/5N0	14016	2209	4	Nigeria
FO5BI/P	14020	0554	5	French Polynesia
JH1ROJ	3509	0617	5	Antigua
TA3D	28014	1446	5	Turkey
KL7UR	28041	2058	10	Alaska
UD6DKW	14013	0405	11	Azerbaijan
FM5WU	14009	0224	12	Martinique
HK6KKK	28024	2245	14	Colombia
ZK1XP	14002	0427	15	South Cook Islands
TK5IU	14001	0556	17	Corsica
EA8ABR	18090	2230	18	Canary Islands
KJ8G/J6L	14012	2222	19	St. Lucia
UZ0KWC	14023	0133	21	Cape Schmidt, Arctic Ocean (Obl. 139)
C56/G3TXF	3501	0438	26	The Gambia

Stop the editor from monopolizing this column! Send contacts, comments, stories, and answers to this month's puzzler to Art Anderson, NT1M, PO Box 9009, Wellesley 02181.

W1TKZ Honor Roll



Following, in alphabetical order [your editor is fond of alphabetical order!], are those who contributed to the HF Transceiver Fund. The Spark Gap salutes one and all:

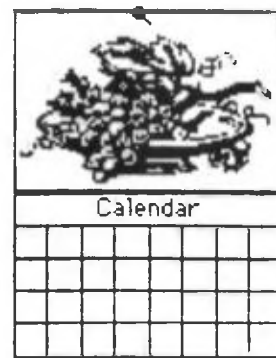
NT1M	Art Anderson
NR1G	Bruno Bedetti
KX1H	Thomas Burton
KA1RWK	Dave Bush
N1FWI	Frank Caci
KA1IU	Mort Cohan
W1UQC	John Derry
KA1000	Jerry Driscoll
KA1SAR	Denis Guillemette
KA1JIP	George Joubert
N1CPE	Tom Kinahan
W1LMU	Harry McDade
WB1BUM	C J MacDonald
AF1R	Ian MacLennan
WA1ZLN	Dick Ruggiero

N1FWJ Sue Sample
 KA1DHV Charlie Stevens
 KC1KQ John Stuart
 KA1ENP Art Thompson
 N1EYZ Roger Tobin
 WA5NVI George Tucker
 ND1Z Vern Valero
 N1EHG Stan Waugh
 NF1Z Jed Weare
 K1CLN Bill Welch

The Fund now stands at \$645. Mort Cohan, KA1IU, has been appointed a selection committee of one to choose a rig for our station. If you see any good HF transceivers for sale, let him know, pronto (508/ 359-7979).

Public Service

Tom, N1CPE, is compiling a list of hams who want to work public-service events. The list would be made available only to other hams who are organizing such events. If you have participated recently in WARS public-service events, Tom will be asking you for permission to put you on the list. Anyone else who would like to be listed should call Tom at 508/ 877-3456



2 Mar	WARS meeting
3 Mar	ARRL DX Contest (phone)
16 Mar	WARS meeting (speaker: N1DDK)
31 Mar	Mass QSO Party
6 Apr	WARS meeting
9 Apr	Framingham flea market
16 Apr	MIT flea market
20 Apr	WARS meeting
30 Apr	WARS flea market (<i>note new date</i>)
4 May	WARS meeting
18 May	WARS meeting
1 Jun	WARS meeting
3 Jun	Deerfield Hamfest
9 Jun	W1TKZ at Mt Equinox (article this issue)
24 Jun	Field Day